

Presbyterian Leader Speaking Sunday At North Decatur

North Decatur Presbyterian Church welcomes the Rev. Joan SalmonCampbell to its pulpit Sunday, Nov. 19.

The Rev. SalmonCampbell is the first black clergywoman elected Moderator of the 201st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. is observing its 200th birthday this year and her election represents an historic moment in the denomination's history.

The public is invited to attend this service of worship at North Decatur Presbyterian Church, 611 Medlock Road, Decatur, at 11 a.m.

12/15/89 NewsSun

Children Donate Goats After Study Of African Life

A Mission Safari "took" the children of North Decatur United Methodist Church on an exciting expedition into Central Africa. The Fellowship Hall of the church was transformed into a place where the children experienced the food, dress, music, games and culture of Africa.

Among the activities was the drawing and painting of a large map of Africa. This was directed by a member of the church, Suzanne Snelling, who is a returned Peace Corp Volunteer. Posters were made representing many facets of African life. Puzzles made from Africa scenes were assembled and discussed. Another popular activity was the painting of a specially designed T-shirt by each child.

First hand experience was brought to the group by Ethleen Lloyd, a public health analyst with the Center for Disease Control who shared slides, puppets and costumes from her tours of duty as a health professional in Africa.

Other resource people sharing experiences were Jonathan Shambare, an art student at LaGrange College from Zimbabwe, and Dr. Morgan Johnson, a retired United Methodist Missionary who served with his wife, Dr. Rosalie Johnson, in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Dr. Johnson brought authentic African drums that the children enjoyed both with music and with storytelling.

When Tim and Carol Crawford, missionaries to Mozambique, visited the church the following week, the children were familiar with their work and sang a greeting to them in the Shitswa language of Mozambique. The offering during the Safari was sent to Heifer Project International to send two goats to needy families in an African country.

In preparation for the closing worship service the boys and girls made a communion cloth and an African-type bread to use in the Communion Service.



Chris Durgan, Jason Durgan, Corine Stubbs and Jonathan Powell learn African rhythms as part of the Mission Safari at the North Decatur United Methodist Church.

Appeal Raises Funds To Battle Homelessness

The Community Appeal To Address Homelessness, an interfaith effort aimed at fighting the problem of homelessness throughout metropolitan Atlanta, raised close to \$280,000, according to Rev. Walter Kimbrough, convener of the Steering Committee of the effort.

The announcement of the amount raised was made at the final steering committee meeting held March 28 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

More than 200 congregations from various faiths and denominations participated in the Community Appeal, holding special offerings the weekend of Jan. 26-28.

"We have said with great clarity that the religious community has the capacity to come together for a common mission," said Rev. Kimbrough, pastor of Ben Hill United Methodist Church. "Because of our efforts, \$280,000 is available to help ease the human suffering of homelessness. That is over a quarter of a million more than what was available this time last year."

The Allocations Committee of the effort presented funding recommendations at the meeting. Close to 100 local agencies applied for grants from the Community Ap-

peal, with requests totalling \$3.2 million. Thirty-one agencies from throughout metropolitan Atlanta received grants totalling \$276,000.

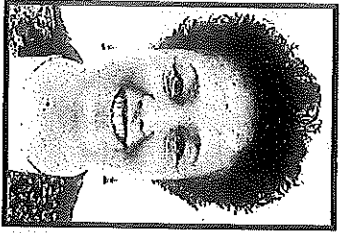
Rev. Charles E. Bennisson, Jr., chair of the Allocations Subcommittee for the effort and rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, presented the recommendations, saying, "A lot of tough decisions had to be made. The programs being recommended represent some of our community's best efforts in addressing the needs of homeless people. Our only regret is that we could not, due to limited funds, support other excellent pro-

grams throughout the community." Steering Committee members of the Community Appeal also voted on continuing the effort next year and appointed a task force made up of clergy to assess this year's effort and to make recommendations for the future of the project.

"What an exciting thing — the faith community has come together. Our support is from the heart. I look forward to next year because we've done a worthy thing that needs to continue," said Rev. Joanna Adams of North Decatur Presbyterian, a Steering Committee member.



Rev. Joanna Adams, of North Decatur Presbyterian Church, at the final Steering Committee meeting of the Community Appeal To Address Homelessness.



Linda Harris

2/2/95

DeKalb man earns honor of outstanding church member

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta sponsored its 10th annual Senior Adult Ministries Celebration last week.

The two-day event focused on the ministry of seniors and included interest groups on Atlanta Area History, Humor in the Bible, How to Retrieve Early Memories and Tell Your Own Story, Retirement Living, Ireland of the Connoisseur, the Atlanta Botanical Garden, and Book Reviews.

The special banquet held on Friday night honored nine nominees for "Outstanding Senior Presbyterian of the Year" and announced the overall winner of the award.

Burt Vardeman, long-time resident of DeKalb County and member of North Decatur Presbyterian Church, won.

More than 50 of his supporters, including two of his children who live out of town, attended the event. North Decatur Presbyterian Church Pastor Agnes Norfleet nominated Burt for the award. This is what she said:

"More than anyone that I have ever known, Burt has committed his life to serve the church as a lay person. He is highly involved at North Decatur Presbyterian Church, deeply committed to the Presbyterian Church (USA), and in his daily life an exemplary disciple of Jesus Christ."

The history she provided contained details of Burt's life. In his 20s he became the business manager at Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Al. While at

Stillman College, Burt and his wife Martha, were active in the Covenant Presbyterian Church where he was ordained an Elder. As young adults they served as youth advisors. Burt was elected Moderator of Tuscaloosa Presbytery, elected Commissioner to the General Assembly, chaired the Church's Building Committee, and was active in Synod's Men's Council. He also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the YMCA in Tuscaloosa.

The Vardeman family left Stillman to come to Atlanta when Burt was called to operate the brand new Presbyterian Center on Ponce de Leon under the General Executive board of the P.C.U.S. During his tenure in Atlanta, he left the Presbyterian Center for a while to manage the Peachtree Center for John Portman. But he was quickly called back and served as Property Manager until he retired when the center closed.

As a lay person Burt has dedicated his entire career to serving the church through his special gifts in business and property management. Burt continues to use his expertise in building and property management in his retirement. He presently serves on the property committee of the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta. He is a member of the Board of Lenbrook Square Retirement Home in Buckhead. Last year he served as treasurer and this year he chairs the Board of Directors.

When Burt and Martha and their children moved to Atlanta, they quickly became active

at North Decatur Presbyterian. Presently Burt serves as the Clerk of the Session, is active in organizing the Men's Breakfast, sings in the choir, readily welcomes guests and goes out of his way to befriend prospective and new members of the church. He has served on three pastor nominating committees and chaired two of them. He chaired the committee to renovate the sanctuary after asbestos was found and needed to be removed. He has chaired several long range planning committees, and is the designated poet of the church.

Burt was one of the organizing founders of PATH, Presbyterian Answer to Hunger. He served on the PATH committee and traveled to Ghana when the group was creating that international partnership to alleviate hunger.

The list of activities goes on for two more pages.

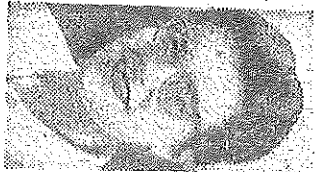
I can attest to Burt Vardeman's outreach to strangers in the church as it was he who welcomed me with open arms when I visited North Decatur Presbyterian some eight years ago. I was searching for a church home and part of my instant affinity with North Decatur grew out of warm greetings from Burt and Martha Vardeman.

As this nomination attests, I am not the only one who has benefited from knowing the Vardeman family. Presbytery of Greater Atlanta has picked a perfect Outstanding Senior Presbyterian of the Year. Congratulations, Burt.

Religious Life Is Growing, Too

By KAY McLEOD

Once upon a time not so very long ago, there was a lovely tract of land just outside Atlanta.



Dotted here and there among the gently rolling, pine-covered hills were a few old white farmhouses and an old, old white frame church.

One day a big real estate man spied the tract. "This would be just the spot for a big subdivision. We'll cut roads here and there," he said, pointing to north and south, "and we'll build 500 houses."

And he did.

Pretty soon the houses were built and 500 families moved in and many, many children played under the trees—and they called it the suburbs.

The little church was bursting at the seams.

ONE DAY a Methodist leader said, "That little church isn't big enough. We'll buy some land and build a new church."

And they did. Soon the Baptists, then the Presbyterians, the Catholics and Lutherans all put up their buildings, too.

Fairy tales? Not at all. It has happened in dozens of spots around Atlanta. And the problems the suburbs have created for the churches all boil down to one thing — build, build, build to keep up with the population.

That little country church? Well, it could have been Sardis Methodist between Sandy Springs and Buckhead. Back in the early 1800s the church was founded. It was a



CONTEMPORARY IS THE WORD FOR NORTH DECATUR PRESBYTERIAN Rev. William Newton Stands in Front of Sign Proclaiming Church's Program, Plans

country church then and remained so for a century and a half.

Then houses sprang up all over the area and the old building, which everybody thought was much, much too big in 1936 when it was built, wouldn't take care of the membership. The Sunday School grew and grew and today three classes have to meet in one room that was never intended for Sunday School space.

TO TAKE care of the people, church leaders got together and with the help of the Atlanta-

Staff Photo—Don Helmsbeck

West district bought an 8.5-acre lot on Mt. Paran road. They're drawing up plans now for a \$200,000 first unit on the new site.

The new churches? There are many of them. In the past 10 years, reports Dr. James L. Baggett of the Atlanta Baptist Assn., about 30 new Baptist churches have been established in suburban areas.

Dr. Nat G. Long says that eight new churches have been established in his district—Atlanta-East Methodist — and a

OLAN M. PANCE
FAMILY WORSHIP

WILLIAM E. NEWTON, PASTOR

like number in the Atlanta-West district.

Presbyterians have organized 18 new churches in the past 12 years, says Dr. Bonneau Dickson, executive secretary of the Atlanta-Presbytery Board of Church Extension.

Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Christians and all the other denominations also have put up numerous churches in the suburbs to give their people church homes near their dwellings.

SIX YEARS ago Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist decid-

ed it would help start a new church on Wieuca road. Second-Ponce de Leon gave \$100,000 for a lot, and 225 members including five of Second-Ponce de Leon's deacons, six Studebaker school department superintendents and 36 teachers joined the new Wieuca Road Baptist Church.

This move hurt neither the mother nor the daughter church. In fact, both have grown beyond all hopes.

"It's a strange thing," says Dr. Baggett, "but starting new churches helps the old church grow."

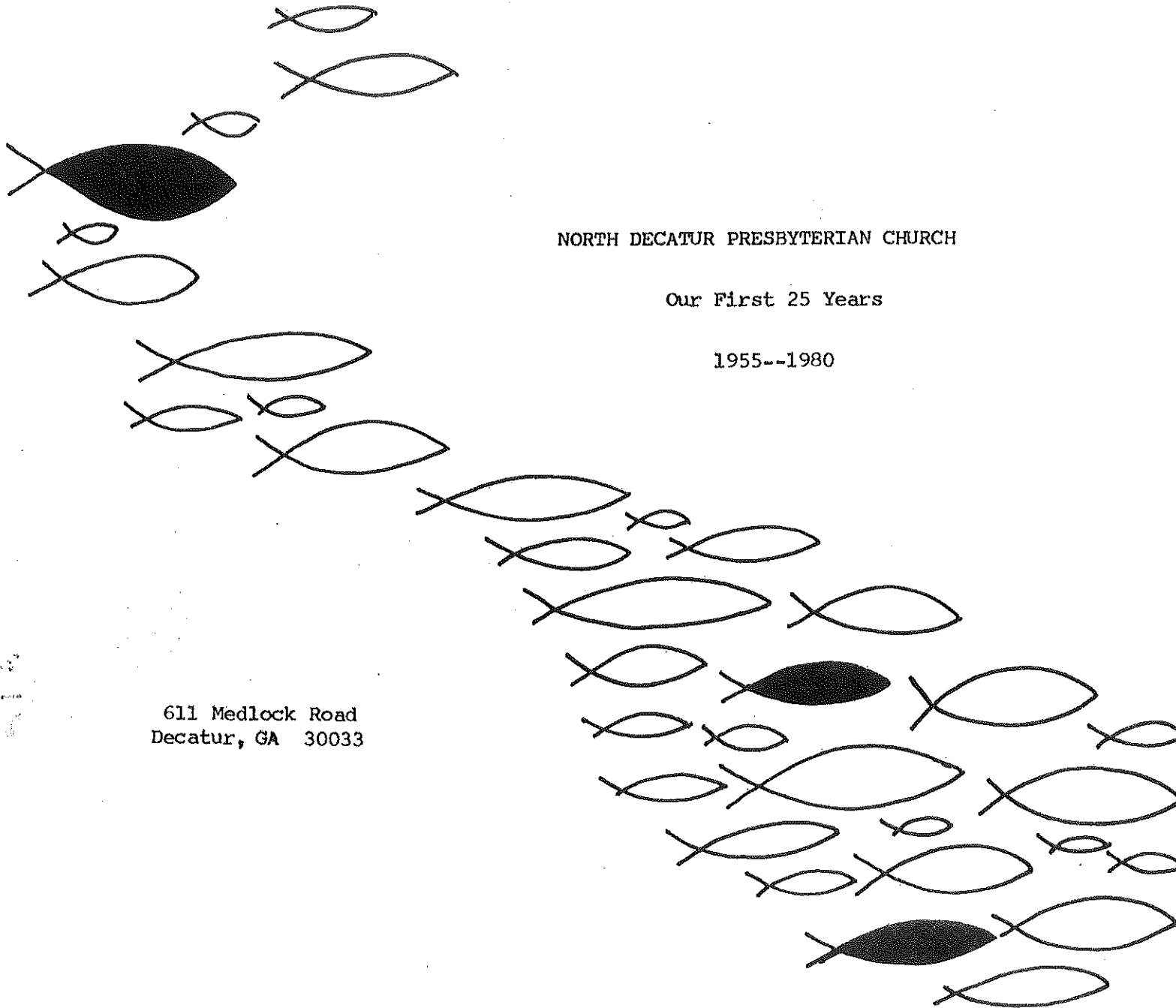
NORTH DECATUR Presbyterian is a church with a modern outlook. The first unit of the church building, which many consider the most modern in Atlanta, stands at the corner of Scott boulevard and North Decatur road.

Out front is a sign which proclaims that this is "a contemporary church inviting a contemporary world to the contemporary Christ."

Like most young suburban churches, North Decatur needed more than it had money for. Members solved the problem by building adequate Sunday school space and a large hall that doubles in brass as a sanctuary, fellowship hall and dining room.

The establishment of churches in all denominations is proceeding by extensive surveys to determine the areas most in need of a house of worship.

These surveys often look far as 20 years into the future. Presbyterians say they'll need to build at least 22 new churches by 1970. Methodists indicate they'll need 20 new churches in the next 10 years and Baptists say they need 10 or 12 new churches now.



NORTH DECATUR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our First 25 Years

1955--1980

611 Medlock Road
Decatur, GA 30033

Foreword

In compiling this 25-year history of North Decatur Presbyterian Church, I have found a wealth of material. Session minutes have been carefully recorded, the early years of which are in safe-keeping at the Historical Foundation in Montreat (we have a microfilm of those years in our church office.) Newsletters from 1958 have been preserved thanks to the efforts of devoted secretaries and staff members (only the year 1973 is missing), and we have a few treasured copies of the first few issues. Many copies of weekly bulletins are on file here or at Montreat. For the first 13 years, the Women of the Church's historian faithfully wrote a yearly summary of their work and that of the church, and kept some scrapbooks, including interesting pictures and clippings.

It has been my privilege to interview some charter members, former ministers (in person and by letter), and others who have been long time members, and I have also drawn freely from brochures and other material used during the two building campaigns.

I have attempted to recount facts and highlights of what our members and pastors have accomplished as they sought to carry out the church's mission in the past. I probably have inadvertently omitted important people and projects, and for that I am sorry.

The purpose of this account is to remind us of what we have already done. As we look at these accomplishments, it is my hope they will inspire us to continue to seek and follow our Lord in His work for us at North Decatur.

Emily C. Boland

October 26, 1980.

OUR FIRST 25 YEARS -- 1955 to 1980

From its beginning, North Decatur Presbyterian Church has been noted for being different. Soon after the initial meeting in the summer of 1955, a protest was voiced by the Decatur Presbyterian Church that there were enough churches in the area and that church withdrew its support temporarily; when the architects' plans were made public and the first building started, the whole community began to wonder at the outlandish styled "modern" building with the upside down roof!; and through the years, NDPC people have taken the initiative in experimenting with new ideas and approaches, discarding those that were unworkable and trying others to produce a vital, serving church in an ever-changing community.

Nearly ten years before the first meeting, Atlanta Presbytery had selected our site for a future church, and by 1950 had acquired the property. A meeting was held in the home of Dick and Mary Ellis on June 3, 1955 and Mary recalls she said at that time, "How could this small group of six people imagine that a church could grow in this particular community?"

However, with the encouragement of Dr. Franklin Talmage and other leaders in the Presbytery, many meetings were held, the news spread, surveys were made and a number of community residents asked to be counted as part of the new effort. By the end of six months of intensive work on the part of a host of dedicated people, the church was organized Thursday, October 27, 1955 and the charter was closed December 4, 1955 with 101 communicant members and 58 baptized children. The congregation met in Medlock School for almost three years, thanks to the cooperation of the principal, Mr. Graham Green, and the courtesy of DeKalb County in making the facilities available. Sunday School was begun with 60 students and 10 teachers and the first volunteer pledge Sunday was held.

The list of early workers is endless and even with the fear of omitting many who should be included, let me recall some of them: The Ellises, the Lonnie Williams, the Conner Nelsons, Mrs. Hazen Smith, the Jim Stewarts, the Warren Rollins, the Robbins, the Robert Halls, the Searcy Slacks, Jr., Mrs. Charles Tindall, the Pattersons, the Dudley Martins, the Latimers and the Fenns. The first elders were Searcy B. Slack, Jr., Richard B. Ellis, and Robert A. Hall. The first deacons were Cliff Zimmerman, Warren F. Rollins, E. T. Robbins, C. LeRoy Howard, James A. Stewart, Smith T. Gower and Lonnie A. Williams.

At the first session meeting, Nov. 1, 1955, Mrs. Lonnie Williams, Mrs. Smith Gower, Mrs. Charles Tindall and Mrs. Merrill Stewart were appointed as a committee with Mrs. Williams as chairman to work out details regarding the organization of the Women of the Church. Plans were also made to start a choir, set up a church nursery, arrange for bulletins for church services, and schedule visiting pastors for the remainder of the year. Even before a pastor was called a pre-planning building committee began work on ideas for the first building, and even before this, we had a Kindergarten committee making plans for opening when the building was ready.

In December 1955 a Pulpit Nominating Committee was elected by the congregation and a rotary system of 4-year terms determined for both elders and deacons. The reading of the names of these leaders only hints at the immense amount of dedicated work that was done in visitation, in handling details for Sunday services in Medlock School, and in exploring all avenues available for financial help and other guidance. The first newsletter was published in April 1956 with volunteer workers and continued quarterly until the first pastor came and as soon as facilities were available, was published either weekly or bi-monthly since then.

From early days there was a deep sense of fellowship and community among the members. A few people from traditional backgrounds wanted the usual "women's Bible class" and "men's Bible class" in Sunday School but others felt that since the members were mostly young couples with small children, they needed flexible classes for Bible study and relevant topics as they developed. This trend has continued through our 25 years and has proved an effective educational tool. Because of the predominance of children in the church family a strong educational church school was conducted from the first. An early innovative procedure was to have a man teacher in each children's Sunday School class, and later the goal was to have a lab-trained teacher for each department at least. One result of the strength of our church's educational program was that North Decatur was recognized as a model and many people came to observe and learn. The Covenant Life Curriculum reports on our children's program was graded as the top in that experimental program and our congregation has reaped benefits in strong leadership through the years from this program and its trained and dedicated leaders.

By October 1956 the congregation had purchased a manse on McCurdy Way and our first pastor, Rev. William E. Newton and family arrived. Bill

endeared himself to the congregation and community by his efforts in getting to know the members, visiting widely in the community and training others to be effective visitors, organizing and planning with every group. The congregation was diligent in visiting new members, prospective ones, and any in need in the area. They met and went out in teams every week and as someone said, "We were so enthusiastic about our church we had to tell everybody!"

This strong visitation program continued for many years and in reading the newsletters, you cannot help but be impressed by the fact that many Sundays new members were welcomed. A part time secretary was secured, weekly bulletins were prepared, office space was rented, and the first Birthday Party of the church was held in connection with a reception to welcome the new minister.

During Bill Newton's pastorate (Oct. 7, 1956 to Oct. 31, 1960) there were many "firsts." In an interview with him, he recalled the early meetings in Medlock School and the fact that what later became the University Heights Methodist Church was also meeting in that school. Our congregation met in the cafetorium and called itself the "cash and carry church" because they had to carry all supplies for meetings, move and re-arrange chairs, tables and other equipment each Sunday. In Aug. 1957 the "Survey" was subscribed to for every home in the congregation and this procedure has continued until now.

Bill said North Decatur was helped greatly by Decatur and Druid Hills churches both with substantial gifts of money and strong leaders from their congregations who were living in our area. North Decatur was started in the boom days of the Presbyterian Church U.S. when the slogan was "a new church a week." Clairmont was organized about 1951 and was the first of the new churches in the area.

Bill also recalled that housing in the North Decatur area was a limiting factor. The first manse, purchased for about \$12,000, was adequate for the times, but as our members began to prosper, they moved into larger homes and within a few years, were having to drive considerable distances to North Decatur but continued because of the fellowship, service and worship they found here.

By 1957 the architect firm of Barber and Cunningham had prepared a master plan which included a two-story multi-purpose Fellowship Hall. Those were exciting days as the congregation watched the building grow and the high point

of Bill's ministry came in the dedication of the Educational Building on July 13, 1958. This was a happy and joyful time with creative worship and an unusually strong educational program for both adults and children. Bill developed, with the encouragement of the Session, the slogan "A Contemporary Church inviting a Contemporary World to the Contemporary Christ." Atlanta Presbytery had from the first encouraged North Decatur to be an "experimental" church and try innovative approaches and programs and because of this, ours was one of several churches in the denomination that was asked to participate in the development of the Covenant Life Curriculum. This proved to be a continuing educational tool still used throughout the denomination.

Dr. Kenneth Foreman, an outstanding theologian and professor of doctrinal theology at Louisville Seminary, preached on one occasion for us and was so impressed by our contemporary building and slogan that he wrote three articles for the "Presbyterian Outlook" concerning what it is to be contemporary. Those articles caused a good deal of comment throughout the Southern church and brought our innovative approach to the attention of many, not all of whom approved, however!

We joined the Greater Atlanta Council of Churches in 1955 and for a number of years cooperated closely with the work in such areas as Grady Hospital Chaplaincy Program, emergency assistance to needy families, radio and TV programs, counseling of inductees at Induction Center, and young people tried by Juvenile Courts, as well as other services to the underprivileged and needy on behalf of all Greater Atlanta Churches.

With the new building, the Weekday Kindergarten, sponsored by North Decatur but financially self-sustaining almost from the first year, was started in the fall of 1958 and served the church and community in an outstanding way for over 20 years. The enrollment was around 100 for many years composed of many of our own children and large numbers from the community. The Kindergarten was approved and commended by state leaders as offering a sound educational program based in loving Christian principles. Its teachers and leaders were elected to serve in organizations dealing with pre-school development. Among the directors were Frances Thompson, Betty Conway, Dorothy Baker, Emily Drury and Jane Blackstock. Virginia Lovelace was director of music from the first, and Elizabeth Statham served as volunteer treasurer for almost 20 years. The Kindergarten closed at the end of the

1979-1980 school year because of changes in community needs and public education programs. Uncounted lives both in the congregation and community have been touched for good by the efforts of the Kindergarten and its dedicated teachers and staff. Not only has the Kindergarten left us a legacy of enriched human lives, but they added to our facilities a fenced playground, cabinets and play equipment in the Kindergarten rooms, an excellent library for teachers, and books and toys for use by our church school.

The Educational Building was planned as a multi-purpose one, with the first floor a Fellowship Hall to be used for Sunday worship and weekday activities, and the second geared to the Christian Education of children. As Bill Newton said, "When the building was being discussed, we realized a neighborhood suburban church couldn't afford a Gothic cathedral, so we used walls of glass buttressed by economical Stone Mountain granite. With walls of glass we keep in touch with the world." The building "with the upside down roof" and fresh new architecture caused many comments and some initial negative reaction, but the design mirrors the program of the congregation as it reaches out to people of the contemporary world. The second floor with its emphasis on Christian Education of children continues to serve that purpose well.

On Sept. 23, 1958 Atlanta Presbytery met in our new building with 150 ministers and ruling elders from 95 churches present. This gave us an opportunity to express gratitude to Presbytery for the property given us which was then valued at approximately \$75,000, plus several hundred dollars worth of other financial assistance. Also at this meeting, Tom DesChamps, first ministerial candidate of our church, was taken under care by Presbytery. The congregation was inspired by this occasion to secure needed tableware for the kitchen, and through diligent work of many, the meeting was a successful event with lunch being served in the upstairs rooms after Weekday Kindergarten was dismissed. Presbytery expressed its gratitude and appreciation and added: "We commend this congregation with praise to God upon the apparent progress made in such a brief period as evidenced by the attractiveness of plant facilities and the cordial, Christian spirit of hospitality."

When Bill Newton resigned his work in 1960, the membership had grown to 378, the Educational Building was in full use every day in the week, the budget total that year was \$54,656 with 15% of this amount going to benevolences, and a sense of joy and happiness continued in the congregation as the people worked together, sought to serve the Lord in many ways, and grew in their understanding of the Christian life.

The Women of the Church were organized our first year and their dedicated efforts and prayers undergirded the entire program. They met to study the Bible and pray together, they visited constantly, they ministered to the immediate needs of our own and those in the community, they saw a vision of what the church could and should be doing and then they did it. They served congregational meals for a number of years, and gave of their resources without stint. The projects they undertook ranged far and wide as this list from a 1961 history shows: hostess for four stewardship suppers, \$75.00 sent to their child at Thornwell, \$27.50 to the DeKalb Council of Church Women to help provide lounge facilities at Milledgeville, food and toy shower for DeKalb needy, 30 members of Columbia Seminary Choir entertained for supper and program, entertainment furnished DeKalb County Senior Citizens for a birthday celebration at Decatur Recreation Center, nursery shower for our own nursery room, baby blankets to Thornwell, money to the DesChamps for their new baby, participated in World Service Overseas Relief, clothes for graduation at Thornwell, 22 women worked on White Cross quota, gifts sent to Senior Citizens at Quitman Home, helped with Bible School, provided refreshments for reception for Malones after evening service, pantry shower for new minister and family, refreshments for reception honoring Pete and Cary Hay, participated in Joy Gift, and celebrated the WOC Birthday with a party and special offering.

The Men of the Church also organized early and began two prayer groups, one Saturday morning at breakfast and the other one evening when they went out as visiting teams. They, too, had many programs, including work on the building of the Scout hut, and gave generously of their time and efforts in many areas. Their meetings and prayer groups provided them with a deep sense of commitment and fellowship, and because both the men and women were dedicated in their prayers and efforts the church continued to grow. Both these groups served faithfully and efficiently throughout the first 15 years of our church. By that time, many women were working outside the home and so the work began to be carried out as a church family.

Boy Scout Troop #462 was organized in the early years with Bill Anderson as Scoutmaster. Most of the boys were from the community because children of our young church members were under 11 at that time! The Troop was very popular and active, Searcy Slack being a driving force and Scoutmaster for many years. With the dedicated volunteer help of many men in the church the scout "hut" was brought from Camp LeJeune, N.C. and erected in 1961-62.

Until very recently Troop #462 had its charter renewed yearly and many young lives were touched through its vigorous program. There have been Eagle Scout award ceremonies in our church for several members of the Troop.

Not only Boy Scouts, but the programs for Cubs, Girl Scouts as well as Campfire Girls have served our people and they have used our buildings for meetings all these years. At one time we had 7 troops of Girl Scouts sponsored by North Decatur involving 117 girls with 17 leaders!

When Bill Newton left, a pulpit committee began work and after months of diligent effort they recommended to the congregation in the spring of 1961 the Rev. Thornton W. "Tony" Tucker, who preached his first sermon for us July 30 and was installed in October. The McCurdy Way manse was sold and another larger one bought on Park Lane for use by the Tucker family. The church had acquired two houses on the Blackmon Drive side of the property for office space and overflow Sunday School classes and bought the corner one in 1963 for \$15,000.

Under Tony's leadership (Oct. 8, 1961 to Aug. 24, 1969) the congregation continued its intensive visitation program, emphasized Christian Education, reached out into the community in many ways, tried innovative worship approaches and used traditional forms, too. The morning worship services were well attended and both the Educational Building and two Blackmon Drive houses were overflowing during Sunday School. Women of the Church and men's organizations continued their vital functions, and studies were made of and by the church to determine its challenge and goals. New members were received nearly every week, in fact 80 were added in Tony's first full year with us. However, many moved away because of business transfers.

The youth work was strengthened by the service of a Seminary student, Scotty Hargrove, who was one of a number of such students who did part time work with us. Vacation Bible School was held each summer, the first three being jointly with other Presbyterian churches in the area before we got into our own building, and each such school met not only the needs of our own people but also many in the community. Worship services were held both morning and night on Sundays with the youth participating often in the evening meetings. We were invited to participate in the Decatur church's School of Missions, which we did for several years, and then began our own program of this sort which continued successfully for several years. On Wednesday nights there were fellowship suppers usually followed by visiting in couples or teams.

Friendship was extended to the large number of International students in the Atlanta area, with students being entertained in our homes, some wives being provided transportation to English classes, and groups being invited to fellowship with us on special occasions.

In 1962 the Session appointed a Building Committee, co-chaired by Bob Hall and Clyde Ware, although it would be two years before a building campaign actually got under way. Also in 1962 we were again host for one of the fifth Sunday union services by the three community churches; we assumed a \$900.00 share in the support of Dr. Randy and Mary Malone as they began their work in Ecuador; and the CLC adult Sunday School material was sent to us, sometimes it seemed in almost overpowering amounts. The plan was for us to try it, along with four other churches so that it would be ready for the entire church in the fall of 1963 and 1964.

By 1964 the Long Range Committee urged the Session to seriously consider erecting the Sanctuary Building. Since Bob Hall had moved away, Jim Stewart was co-chair with Clyde Ware. Following much preliminary work by people and architects, (Barker and Cunningham, the same ones who built our first unit,) the Campaign Director arrived Oct. 12, 1964, set up office in the Brown House and by the time of our 9th Birthday Party that same month, there were glowing reports of the success of the campaign which went over the top with a total of \$114,359.00 over our Basic Operation Budget. Many, many people worked with the co-chairmen to make this such a successful venture, especially Ben Hood, Ed Jones, Jack Osteen, De Jackson, Steve Cherry, Carl Riggs, Buck Wallace and Art Roberts, as well as their twelve team captains and the 60 team members.

Ground breaking was held June 13, 1965 and the great day finally arrived, after being delayed by workers' strikes, when the first service was held in the Sanctuary Building Oct. 2, 1966. With a sense of awe and great rejoicing the congregation moved from the crowded Fellowship Hall into the worshipful atmosphere of the beautiful new building, the result of much prayer and sacrifice. The first service coincided with the celebration of World-Wide Communion and in the afternoon there was an Open House so that neighbors and friends could visit us. We had many additional visitors all through those first months who came to visit and rejoice with us in our new facilities.

Donna Rooney (now Mrs. Bob DesJarlais) was installed in Sept. 1967 as our first full time Director of Christian Education. In response to a letter asking her to recount some of the high-lights of her nearly five years with us, she wrote as follows:

"My thoughts turn first to the Scottdale community, to the North Decatur-Scottdale study group and to the people who composed that group; to the organizing of the Scottdale Kindergarten and to the children and adults that participated in that effort. Then to the young people of North Decatur and their involvement in the larger community: the faithful group who worked every Saturday morning for at least three years with the children at Davison School; those who delivered Surplus Food to individuals and families who were unable to get the food for themselves; the "Walk Against Hunger"; the group who travelled to Gallup, N.M. to work in the Indian hospital there.

"Then to MANNA -- the many meetings that led to the initial organization of that most important program for people in need. But superseding all programs and organizations are the individual members of ND who deeply care for each other and also deeply care for the larger community. To have been part of North Decatur Presbyterian for those years is a gift I will always cherish."

North Decatur continued its witness and service and Tony's leadership was an inspiration as he preached and taught and encouraged the people to give of themselves and their means. Many people joined but as was becoming more and more true of the times, many were transferred so that our growth was steady but not phenomenal. In fact, a look at the membership figures by years indicates that we grew to 552 before Tony left and the next year we showed 596 but this latter figure included baptized children! In the next year or so the roll had to be culled and at that time some incorrect figures were used in our report to Presbytery, so that not until later did the figures begin to show a true record of our membership.

Even with all this however, the church was reaching out both in the community and overseas. We had special ties to Dr. Randy and Mary Malone, to the John Ellingtons, the Rion Dixons, and the Larry Richards, and were able to designate benevolent funds to their support so we could claim them as "ours."

In June 1969 the congregation had the unusual opportunity to participate in the ordination of Bill Huie as a minister of the Presbyterian Church. He had been a member of our congregation during part of his preparation at Columbia Seminary and had recently been called to be Director of Radio at TRAV. While this may have been the only service of ordination of a candidate for the Gospel ministry in our church, North Decatur has had an unusually large number of men and women who have been called to ministry, beginning with the first, Tom DesChamps, ordained 7/16/61; W. Rion Dixon, 7/6/65; Bill Huie (see above); Renee Huie 9/2/73; Eric Swenson 11/18/73; Lynn Shurley 7/28/74; Joanna Adams 7/1/79; and Lib Simmons 8/29/79. A number of others have spent part of

their time of preparation with us and moved on to other churches: Frank Vardeman, Pat Eier, Randy Dempsey, Lindsay Kennedy and David Morgan. At present we have four either under care of Presbytery or in Seminary who belong to us: Ann McCandless, Emmie Young, Mary Jane Cornell and Marilyn Washburn. In fact, at one time recently Atlanta Presbytery took note of the fact that "North Decatur Church has more candidates for the Gospel Ministry than any church in our Presbytery."

By mid-summer 1969 Tony Tucker was led to accept a call to a church in Charlotte and it was with love and appreciation for all he and his family had done for us that we regretfully said good-bye. North Decatur had grown under his leadership from a total of 330 members in 1961 to 552 at the end of 1969. Giving had increased from \$48,450 to \$113,718, with generous percentages going to benevolences each year. Both buildings were widely used not only on Sunday but through the week by such diverse groups as Boy, Girl and Cub Scouts, Camp-fire girls, Parents without Partners, Square Dance Groups, a polling place for civic elections, many committee meetings directly and indirectly connected with the church, and Alcoholics Anonymous! The Kindergarten still served admirably and the congregation took such pride in the beauty of the landscaping that we had many "work days" for raking, trimming, pruning, etc. throughout the years.

One outreach into the community developed about 1967 when some of our members met with black neighbors in the Scottdale area to discuss areas of mutual concern. Leaders in this effort were Ed Jones, Marti and Bob Padgett, Thad and JoAnne Godwin, Betty Vinson, Carole Goodspeed and others from our church. From Scottdale some of the leaders were Daisy Bigsby, Gussie Brown, Susie Kendrick, Howard and Effie Frost, Geneva Slaton, Rev. William Reid and Rev. Chester Carter, as well as representatives from the Scottdale Civic Association, a small but active organization. The group began meeting monthly and discovered the lack of recreational facilities for Scottdale young people. At a "Meet the Candidates" forum sponsored by this group, a candidate promised that if elected he would see that a swimming pool was built at Tobie Grant Park. Because of the heavy voter turn out from Scottdale he was elected, the pool was built and continues to be a focal point for healthful recreation.

Another area of concern was safety for school children: the walk lanes to Medlock were well marked and patrolled, but not around Robert Shaw. As a result of the group's efforts, signs were erected and speed limits reduced in critical areas. There were improvements made in street lights, security, and road paving because this group worked together. The group was a study and action

group that emphasized the study because as needs were called to the attention of the proper agencies, action usually resulted. The group met alternately at Scottdale and North Decatur, had refreshments together and occasionally a meal at one of the nearby eating places, but essentially they sought ways to express concern for each other as caring Christians. Another highlight of this effort was a prayer and memorial service held a few days after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. to which a great crowd of people, black and white, came to share their grief. They met in a tension-free atmosphere because of the work this group had done through the years.

North Decatur has continued working closely with Scottdale. After surveys made in 1971 a free pre-school enrichment program was set up with volunteers led by Nelda Hollender and others from our church working with Scottdale people to offer this program. A funded Kindergarten developed out of this effort, and in recent years, after long, devoted and sacrificial work by many, the Scottdale Day Care Center opened July 24, 1977 and within a few days was operating at full capacity of 54 plus a long waiting list. Nelda Hollender was employed as Director. In 1979 the Center, which has been highly praised by professionals, was funded by United Way, the only such project added to United Way that year. Rich friendships have developed and flourished between the two areas and from time to time our people have worshipped with the Travelers' Rest congregation, and they have come to us to share their Gospel singing and participate in our services.

One characteristic of North Decatur was expressed by someone who in the early years said "North Decatur always has visitors," and someone else who said, "This is the friendliest church I ever saw!" Because of our openness, a good many people felt called to join us although they had been out of the church for a number of years, or some of the families had never made their profession. A reading of the churches from which our members came and the number of adult baptisms, indicate that we had many from non-Presbyterian backgrounds but they came in response to the Lord's call and out of their varied experience were able to contribute in a unique way to a unique situation.

During the times we were without a minister we were fortunate to have capable preachers from the area who served as visiting and or supply ministers. When Tony left, we asked Tom Jones to be the interim minister and he served well in this capacity. Some felt he may have brought us more innovative ideas than we were ready for, but we had already begun experimenting with some new approaches.

In January 1970, Larry Kennon and his family arrived and while for some,

his three years with us was a turbulent time, we must remember that not only did Larry inherit some of Tom Jones' ideas but "the times they were a-changing." Like other congregations we moved with the whole country into a stressful period, many homemakers joined the work force, and perhaps people began to evaluate what they were looking for and moved out into other churches because the Lord was leading them and us into different areas of service. Almost all the people who left, and there were large numbers of them, joined other congregations and continued to be active in the Lord's work which spoke well for their experience at North Decatur. At the same time we were receiving members who wanted to be a part of North Decatur.

During Larry's ministry (Jan. 1970 to Aug, 1973) we all learned, and as he said in a recent letter, there was an excitement/repulsion reaction to some of the more innovative forms of worship. Many found new meaning in worship and a careful look at some of our programs now indicates that forms of worship introduced and tried while Larry was here are almost commonplace with us now. Larry evaluated one of our strengths as being that we were a "pastoring" congregation, ministering to the needs of our members and the community in a way that witnessed to the abiding love of God in our hearts. This particular strength has indeed been a hallmark of our efforts and is recognized by the fact that our Sunday bulletin, when listing the staff reads: "Ministers.....All the Members of the Congregation."

North Decatur has always attracted a number of ministers and their families who are connected with Columbia Seminary and the Presbyterian Center. For this reason we have been blessed with strong leadership by professional people. However we have also had lay men and lay women who have given generously of their abilities. The men who served as elders and deacons in early years, worked faithfully and their work was undergirded by women leaders. Shortly after the General Assembly approved the ordination of women to the office of elder and deacon, North Decatur elected Mrs. Hazen Smith and Miss Janie McCutchen as elders in 1966; in the next nine years, the church elected Frances Query, Martha Vardeman, Sherrea Short, Lee Phillips, Ann Curtis, Gretta Dewald, Vernon Jones, Alice Bonner, Emily Boland and Mary Alice Henning to be elders. In that same period, beginning in 1968, Pat Bent and Frances Pledger were the first elected deacons, followed by Lee Phillips, Ele Jackson, Gail Alexander, Emily Boland, Nelda Hollender, Billie Speed, Mary Louise Robinson, Jeannette Scholes, Mary Ellis, Rose Keaton, Rose Keith, Joanna Adams and Helen McElroy. In February 1976 we began using the unicameral system and at present have a Session of 30 elders, 13 of whom are women.

Someone suggested that we should name some of the "great women" of the early days of North Decatur, which would include Mrs. Hazen Smith who gave untiringly of her time and resources, whose open-hearted life style was an inspiration, whose home was always available for committee meetings, meals and Christmas parties; another would be Janie McCutchen whose talent, energy and devotion to the Lord's work was a constant inspiration; Mrs. Tindall who set an example of faithfully and sincerely loving the Lord; and Mrs. Montgomery who stood firmly in her belief and never wavered or hesitated to speak up for what she believed was right. Those who were in the church in those beginning years will also remember with affection and respect such leaders as Mary Hood, Claire Petersen, Laynette Orazi, Ele Jackson, Betty Marie Stewart, Marge Ware, Nell Hall, Dot Scott, Callie Waters, Nina Williams -- and on and on.

This is not to say there were not also "great men" in those early days: Dick Ellis, Steve Cherry, Ben Hood, Searcy Slack, Phil Orazi, Bob Hall, Don McNutt, Jim Stewart, Conner Nelson, De Jackson, Clyde Ware, Burt Vardeman -- and on and on. Always, too, our young people were growing and taking their place on committees and at early age were being elected to the diaconate and session: Danny Cogswell, Jack Kittle, Carol Ellis, Cile Vardeman, Jeff Alexander, David Godfrey, John Dewald, as well as serving in unknown ways to witness to the faith they had learned at North Decatur. There were many others of all ages and phases in our church's life who served as teachers in church and vacation school, on councils and committees, in maintenance work to keep our grounds and buildings in beautiful condition and witnesses to the work of North Decatur in the community and elsewhere.

North Decatur members have participated as leaders in Presbytery and General Assembly. Our Session has been represented at Presbytery meetings by one elder and minister. As early as 1958, Presbytery elected Jim Stewart as commissioner to the General Assembly, and since then others have served in the following years: Dick Ellis, 1966; Mrs. Smith, 1969; Burt Vardeman, 1972; Martha Vardeman, 1976; and our pastor, Rev. Joseph Harvard, in 1979. Presbytery elected Burt Vardeman as Moderator in 1973, and in the spring of 1980, Martha Vardeman was elected. This may be the only instance in our entire church where both husband and wife have served in this important office.

It is fitting at this point to note that many capable people have served as staff members, both paid and unpaid, beginning with Peggy Rowland who typed the Sunday bulletins for us after her full time job at another church, and

continuing on through Fran Shuford, Julie Martin and Martha Zimmerman in the early years. Margaret Hitchcock was church secretary from 1964 to 1974 and for another year ending in June 1980, with Barbara Benedict serving during those intervening years. And we are especially indebted to Barbara and Betty Busbee who are filling this important place while we are without a pastor. For many years Willie Simon was a faithful and capable custodian and now John Watts has been in this position a little over eight years.

Music provided by various choirs and the faithful work of organists and choir directors through the years have been invaluable to North Decatur. Volunteers from neighboring churches gave their services until we moved into our first building, and from 1958 until 1971, Virginia Lovelace was our organist, faithfully providing music not only Sundays but on many other occasions, always serving with love and cheerfulness. One Saturday Virginia went to practice for services in the Fellowship Hall. She had been complaining of some strange noises in the building and this time, when she turned on the organ, the noises were alarming. She phoned Flo who rushed up and began poking around the foot pedals when out came a mother cat with a newborn kitten in her mouth! There were five kittens in all and since no one would claim the mother and family, the Lovelaces took the entire family to their house and finally managed to find homes for all of them.

There have been a number of choir directors who have led choirs for adults, youth, juniors and children. A number of young people who began their contact with the church through the music program have moved into the adult choir or are serving our church and others in various areas because of these early contacts. The first children's choir was organized while we were still meeting in the Medlock School. The children were given attendance pins and knew that if they did not attend regularly, they would be dropped. Many faithful women devoted their leadership to training the youth choirs. Special music events by the children have been featured in worship services. In recent years the music productions developed by the Mathews during Vacation Church School have been outstanding -- remember such joyous occasions as "Good Sam", "It's Cool in the Furnace", "David and the Giants", and "100% Chance of Rain"?

Drama groups have made a great contribution at North Decatur from the gala times at birthday parties when people and events of the past year were recalled in fun and frolic, to choral readings, brief plays in church, to Christmas pageants such as the one when all the participants were children and also the one when the congregation sat or stood in the Fellowship Hall and the "stage" was the

outdoor area toward Scott Boulevard (this was before such heavy traffic developed on that busy thoroughfare). There was the group that called itself the North Decatur Players who produced outstanding plays such as "Our Town," and "Inherit the Wind," during which a warm sense of fellowship and friendship developed between cast and crew and spilled over into the congregation because of the enthusiasm and display of talent.

North Decatur continued to find ways to reach out into the community. One instance was during an ice storm in 1973 when power was off in the area and our warm facilities were made available for 60 to 70 families who found welcome refuge for sleeping and eating in the buildings during a twenty-four hour period. Another special effort was begun in the early 1970's with the program known as MANNA or Meals-on-Wheels. This was an effort to provide a hot noon meal plus a bag supper for older people who wanted to continue living in their homes but could not manage grocery shopping and cooking for all their food. After much careful, cooperative planning the program began in October 1971, with Plantation Cafeteria providing and packing the meals and volunteer drivers picking them up and making deliveries on assigned routes. In the first week over 100 meals were served and greatly appreciated by the recipients. Some could pay for the service and others were provided through funds given by participating churches. The program grew so rapidly and was so needed that within two years there was a paid director, with volunteers still making deliveries, and by 1975 the program was turned over to the DeKalb County Council on Aging. At present 205 meals a day are being served from the Decatur distribution point, and a similar program has begun in Stone Mountain with another in North DeKalb almost ready to begin. There are about 485 volunteers giving their time to this service and apparently the program will continue to grow. In addition to funding by government sources the program still relies on contributions from the churches and business and civic organizations who participate. At present about 30% of the recipients are able to pay for their meals and some of the others contribute as they are able. From our church Al Adams was one of the strong leaders in getting this program started, assisted by many who supported his efforts in planning and provided the essential service as volunteer drivers.

When Larry asked Presbytery in the summer of 1973 to dissolve the relationship between him and our congregation, it was again necessary to elect a pulpit nominating committee. We were fortunate in being able to secure Rev. Cas Robinson to serve as interim pastor for eight months and our deep appreciation goes to him

for his concern and care for us at that time. There was some bitterness among some of our people because of many changes, but others were earnestly seeking to find the Lord's leading into a new day of service and spiritual growth. Cas brought a sense of his dedication and concern for the congregation and individuals, preaching strong Biblical sermons, leading effectively in Session and other group planning, and endearing himself to all during this difficult time.

In March 1974 the Pulpit Committee recommended to us Rev. Joseph S. Harvard who was called, and he with his wife and two children arrived in May to begin their work with us. It was the Harvards' choice to buy their own home and so the officers were relieved of the responsibilities and duties of maintaining a manse, and the Park Lane house was sold. At a "Coffee for Cas" we were able to express our love and thanks to Cas for all that he and his family had meant to us at this particular time.

Because of Cas' interim ministry and the fact that the people were desirous of becoming again an innovative, loving, concerned, growing and active congregation, Joe Harvard found most of our programs still operating. The Sunday church school was still sound although enrollment had dropped drastically, the Kindergarten functioned well and had started a "Mother's Morning Out" program that was very helpful to the community. Vacation Church School was already planned and we continued our outreach in the community through fifth Sunday joint worship with churches in the area, with the MANNA program, Decatur Cooperative Ministry, Villa, Literacy Action, Scouting and cooperative work with the Scottdale group. The women had a program of Bible study and were beginning to feel they could perhaps serve effectively without being highly organized as Women of the Church.

During his first six months, Joe led a planning retreat for officers at Camp Calvin, helped organize parish groups through the diligent work Dick Ellis had done in mapping the location of every family geographically, and led the congregation in an outstanding celebration of the Advent season which helped give us a closer sense of community as a warm and caring church family.

As our minister, Joe was always on call at times of trouble or rejoicing, he was aware of needs in the community nearby and throughout the country and world, he preached messages that taught of the loving forgiveness of God and at the same time stirred us to the plight of people next door and around the world. He and Carlisle opened their home to groups and individuals, and they both took active part in diverse activities. Joe was respected for his leadership ability in Presbytery, Synod and Assembly and was called on for more than he could possibly do, but somehow he managed to meet many needs, being concerned first of all for the spiritual

well-being of the people of North Decatur.

During his first years with us, new people were beginning to join but others were still leaving due to transfers and the roll needed more culling and updating. The membership actually declined through 1977, but total giving to the church in money greatly increased. By 1978, membership had stabilized at 345 (a total gain of four over the preceeding year) and total giving from \$83,976 in 1974 to \$115,425 in 1978. It is impossible to measure the growth that had been experienced by individuals who came to North Decatur either as part time participants or as full time members. Whenever there was a crisis there was a loving outpouring of concern, and at times of rejoicing, the whole congregation took an interest in sharing that too. The members spent enormous amounts of time in devoted service to keeping the buildings and grounds in order, in teaching church school and other groups, in planning meetings for many phases of the work, and always the officers were diligent in their concerns and responsibilities.

One outstanding achievement in 1975 was the arrival of our first refugee family, Tran Quang and Ahn Thieu, and their baby Trong, and other members of their family. The "Grey House" was completely renovated, almost entirely by volunteer work, and furnishings were gathered, the pantry was stocked, clothes were assembled and it was a time of rejoicing to welcome this family. The Thieus endeared themselves to us all by their appreciation and effort to find their way in this new and strange land. Within a year they had become independent to the extent they no longer needed money from us; the house was furnished rent-free for another year but by that time they began paying a small amount of rent. They have kept the house in good condition and have assisted in work on the church grounds. Mrs. Thieu for quite a while helped in the church nursery. The original couple moved to Baxley where Mr. Thieu has a good job with a utility company, but they have kept their ties here and through the four years they have occupied the house, 45 members of their family have at various times lived with them on their way to finding their place in this country. Our refugee effort has been from the first a joint one with St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, and at present the two churches are sponsoring another family in the "Brown House," which was also renovated by volunteers from both churches.

By 1976 our congregation had decided to use the unicameral system of officers. Thirty Elders were elected to serve three year terms and were organized into seven Council which have functioned well. There has always been a strong feeling at North Decatur that we needed to devote more and increasing amounts of our money to benevolences and a study of our statistical sheets shows a steady increase in this direction in the last five years. The special offerings each

year such as One Great Hour, Women's Birthday, Hunger and Joy Gift have always had a generous response, and many individuals have given to special causes through the church during the years. Each year the officers and others have led us in a strong program of stewardship. We have had special ties through the years with various missionary families and designate some of our benevolent funds to the support of specific people.

A review of activities in 1977 and 1978 indicates that North Decatur continued its outreach into the community and around the world in programs already established. New interest in criminal justice developed and we cooperated in the "Friends Outside" program, undergirding it with financial and bookkeeping support until it became funded and secured a full time director for a home provided for families visiting inmates at the Federal Penitentiary. The Scottdale Day Care Center opened July 24, 1977 and within a few weeks was running smoothly at full capacity of 54 pupils with a long waiting list. Lib Simmons, Joan Edgerton and Sally Lodge Henderson worked full or part time as directors of Christian Education in these years and in the fall of 1978, Nancy Miller joined our staff as Church Educator giving part time in hours but whole-heartedly in planning and directing all parts of the educational program. Vacation Church School continued its effective program of Bible study culminating in a musical program, one year presenting "David and the Giants," and another "Good Sam." The Kindergarten continued its excellent work, Sharing-Caring groups were formed and functioned well, and Mrs. Rose Byrne, who had kept the baby nursery during Sunday morning for 22 years resigned and was honored at a morning worship service with words and gifts of appreciation.

In July 1979 our church cooperated with Druid Hills in housing over 60 Japanese girls and their teachers from Kinjo College, Nagoya. The group was in Atlanta two nights and three days for sightseeing. Each family that entertained the guests had a good experience in getting to know these attractive and capable members of another culture. Also in this year, Burt Vardeman was sent to Ghana by Atlanta Presbytery and upon his return brought stirring messages of the dire need there for food and water. One result of his trip is that our congregation is supporting actively PATH (Presbyterian Answer To Hunger). Another mission emphasis was strongly presented through the Witness Season in the spring on China, led by Dr. Frank Brown, with the Whallon family from Taiwan being visitors during this time and also Dorothy Barnard. A special mission offering of well over \$2,000.00 was received.

Our educational program continued to flourish under the direction of Nancy Miller, church educator, and again we had a seminary student, Mary Jane Cornell as summer intern. Vacation Church School was again successful and presented the musical drama of "Babble at Babel."

As we began the decade of the 80's we had strong programs in progress and looked ahead to new challenges and goals. By the middle of 1980, however, Joe Harvard had accepted a call to Durham, N. C., Ted and Linda Mathews had resigned to work in another church, and Margaret Hitchcock had to give up her secretarial work for health reasons. As someone said we were thankful we still had Nancy Miller and John Watts on the staff! We also had capable leaders on the Session, in councils, on the church school staff and many others who undergirded all efforts with their prayers, gifts and service as needed.

A "Transition Committee" was appointed by the Session and a Pulpit Nominating Committee elected by the congregation. The Long-Range Committee developed an extensive outline for NDPC's Mission in the 1980's and all of us looked forward to the fact that by the end of the decade our present building debt will be paid.

This review of 25 years has indicated that one of our strong points has been fellowship in both the work of the church and its recreation times, and the Birthday Celebrations have been a large part of the latter. These celebrations began with the first year, which was a 1920's Review, followed by School Daze, the Sizzlin' Sixth, a Hootnanny, Ha-Ha-Hee-Hee, "Wedge Head" in 1966, a Hippy Birthday, Laugh In, Hee-Hee Hoe Down, and All in the (Church) Family. For the 20th we had a gala celebrating charter members who were present, and the next year Donna and her husband Bob DesJarlais were present. Then who can forget Bonnie and Clyde, Haw-Haw, and the 1979 Sunday Morning Fervor with its disco theme! From the first these have been special times of fun and frolic. Jack and Charlotte Hart and a host of co-workers did much of the planning in the early years, always assisted and encouraged by Clyde Ware. For a number of years Betty Marie Stewart scripted and directed the skits, and other leaders have kept the fun going through recent years.

In closing this look at our first 25 years, it seems fitting to use a paragraph from a sermon by Mary Jane Cornell, a senior at Columbia Seminary, titled "What About the Future?" that she delivered at North Decatur on August 31, 1980.

"You are people who have shown me what it means to live by faith. That is true of individuals in this congregation and of the church as a whole. This congregation has a history of risk-taking. It began 25 years ago with people being willing to risk founding a new congregation. There has been a continuing willingness to take a stand on issues, to make room for a wide variety of viewpoints, risking arguments and conflict. This church has been willing to give support to sometimes unpopular causes, to begin new programs with the chance of failure. It hasn't been easy. The future will not be easy. The 1980's bring new challenges which will test our faith. But North Decatur Church has stayed alive in the past and faces its second quarter-century of service willing to accept the risks of that discipleship; willing to risk because of a firm faith -- a faith not in a plan, but in a Person -- the Person of Jesus Christ."

Significant Dates & Events

Presbytery selects site which was acquired in 1950
First meeting at home of Dick and Mary Ellis June 3, 1955, 6 people present
Meetings begin at Medlock School on Sundays and in homes during week
Church organized Oct. 27, 1955; charter closed Dec. 4, 1955, 101 members
First manse purchased in fall of 1956
Rev. W. E. Newton and family arrive, installation service Oct. 7, 1956
Two Blackmon Drive houses acquired
Building Committee elected in December 1956
Educational Building ground-breaking July 13, 1957
Service of Consecration of Educational Building July 13, 1958
The Newtons leave Oct. 31, 1960
Scout Hut erected 1961-1962
McCurdy Way manse sold, Park Lane manse purchased
Rev. Thornton W. "Tony" Tucker and family arrive, installation Oct. 8, 1961
Third Blackmon Drive house bought in 1963
Sanctuary Campaign Director arrives Oct. 12, 1964, office in "Brown House"
9th Birthday Dinner reported \$114,359 pledged for 3 years
First service in Sanctuary Building Oct. 2, 1966
Donna Rooney begins her work with us Sept. 1967
The Tuckers leave August 1969
Rev. Larry D. Kennon and family arrive, installation Feb. 8, 1970
Donna Rooney leaves December 1972
The Kennons leave August 1973
Park Lane Manse sold
Rev. Joseph S. Harvard and family arrive, installation May 19, 1974
Weekday Kindergarten closes after 21 years
At beginning of 1980, 371 members, proposed budget \$135,010
The Harvards leave August 1980

Summary of Statistics

1955 -- 1980

Year	Membership as of December 31st	Total Gifts to All Causes	Percentage to Benevolences
1955	101	Organized October 1955	--
1956	134	\$24,267	6
1957	239	32,758	6
1958	335	52,072	7
1959	375	52,438	12
1960	378	54,636	15
1961	330	48,450	17
1962	370	58,712	21
1963	397	60,346	18
1964	416	65,646	18
1965	436	90,836	15
1966	479	93,050	16
1967	526	100,093	20
1968	539	113,718	21
1969	552	97,611	19
1970	596*	98,226	17
1971	577	100,533	13
1972	566**	90,977	6
1973	404	80,806	8
1974	384	83,976	12
1975	360	94,647	11
1976	359	108,813	10
1977	341	112,485	14
1978	345	115,425	15
1979	371	130,915	15
1980		135,010 - proposed budget	

* includes baptized children

** incorrect figure reported to Presbytery

DEKALB HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OLD COURTHOUSE ON THE SQUARE
DECATUR, GEORGIA 30030

1985-27